



# THORCAL

## Thor's Shield



ARTWORK

G. ROSINSKI - Y. SENTE

SCRIPT



Europe  
COMICS

Rosinski





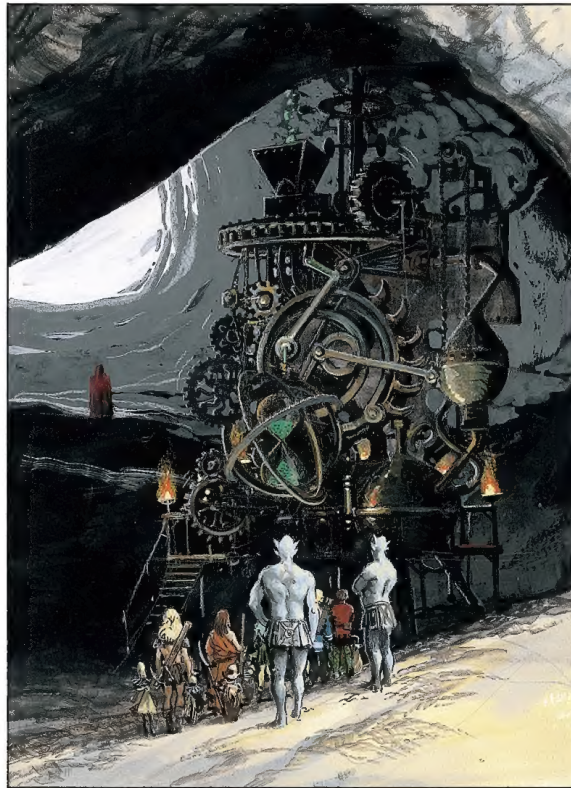
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## Thor's Shield



The series *Thorgal* was created by writer Jean Van Hamme and artist Gregorz Rosinski.



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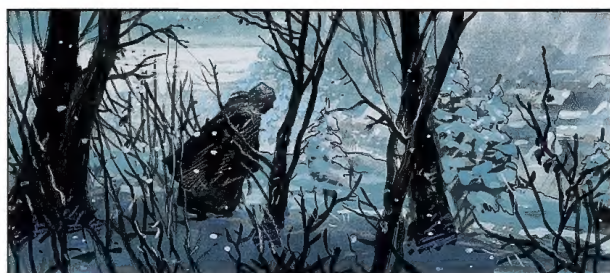


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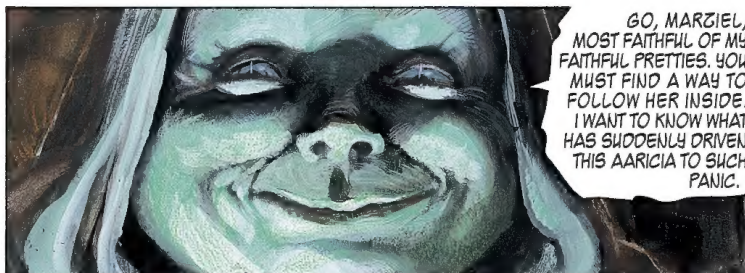


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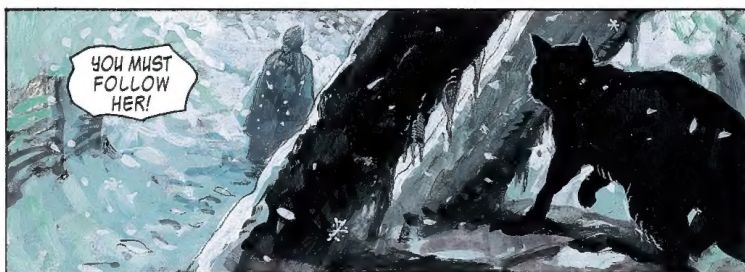








GO, MARZIEL,  
MOST FAITHFUL OF MY  
FAITHFUL PRETTIES. YOU  
MUST FIND A WAY TO  
FOLLOW HER INSIDE.  
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT  
HAS SUDDENLY DRIVEN  
THIS AARICIA TO SUCH  
PANIC.



YOU MUST  
FOLLOW  
HER!

MY DARLING WIFE RETURNS HOME  
AT LAST! IS IT TO CHECK HOW MANY  
OF MY TEETH SHE KNOCKED OUT  
OR TO TRY TO FINISH ME OFF?



OH, THORGAL! I'M SO SORRY, BUT  
... THE THINGS I HEARD!

THEN CALM  
DOWN, MY SWEET,  
AND TELL ME WHAT  
HAPPENED.

YES, YES. I'LL TELL YOU  
EVERYTHING, BUT FIRST, ARE  
THE CHILDREN ... ?

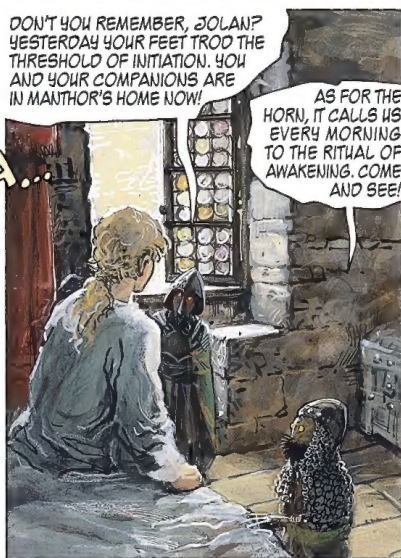
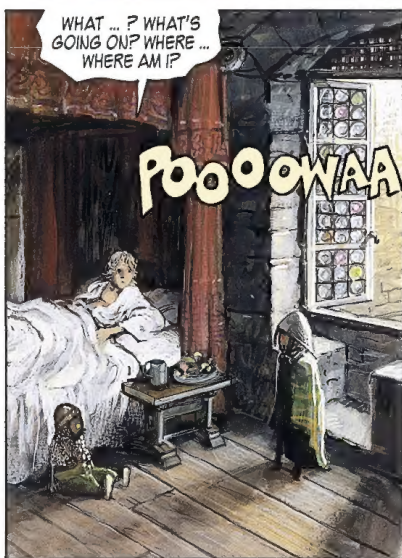


DON'T WORRY.  
THEY'RE BOTH  
SOUND ASLEEP.

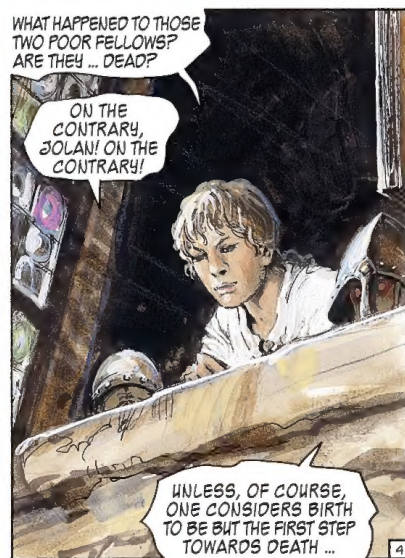
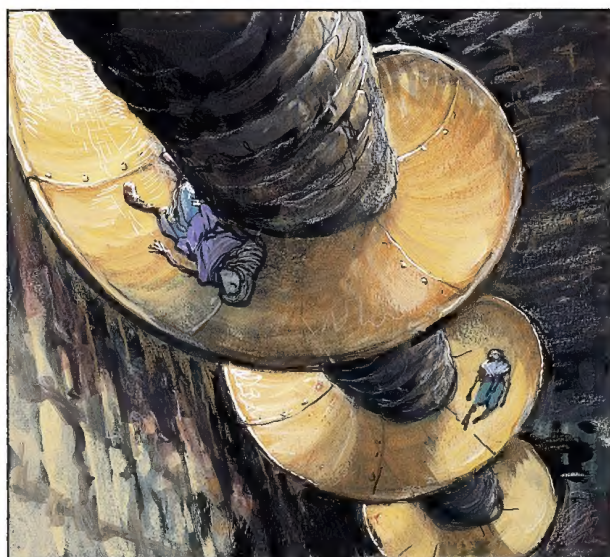


WARM YOURSELF BY THE  
FIRE. I'LL CLOSE THE DOOR  
AND THEN YOU CAN TELL  
ME YOUR STORY.

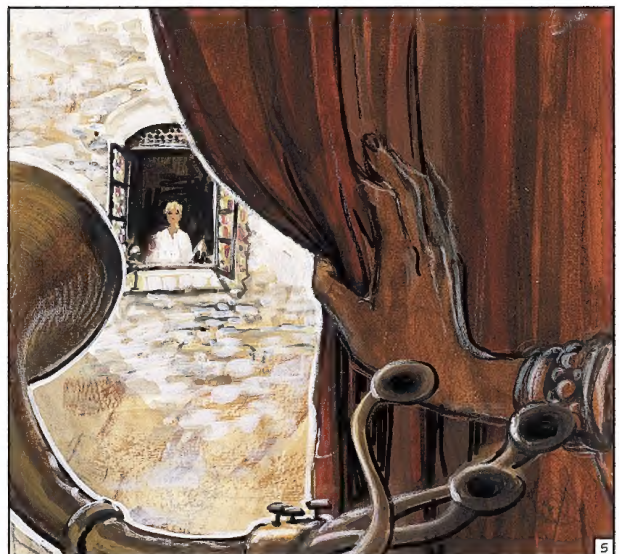
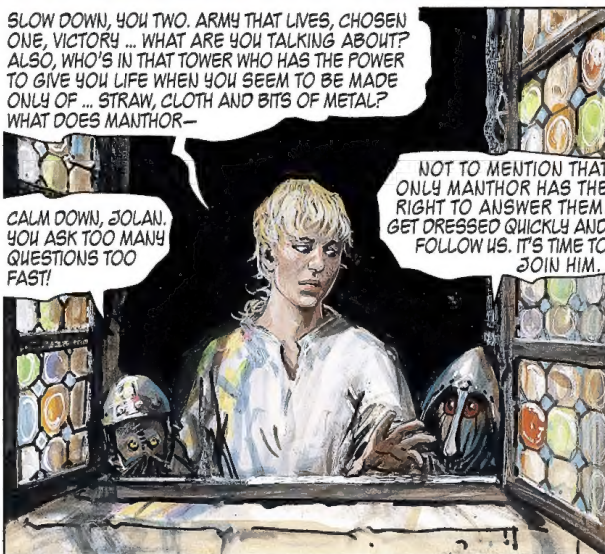




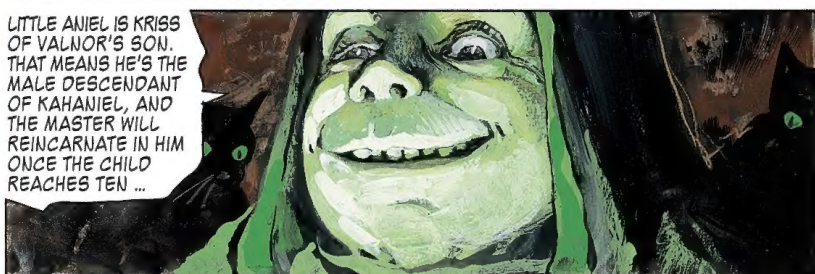
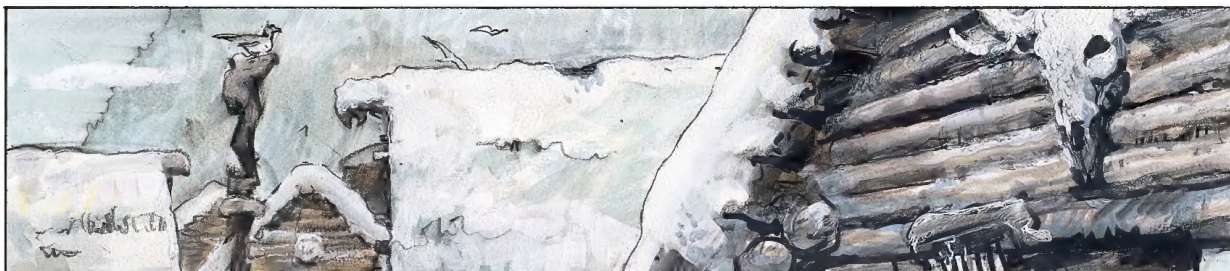
















THIS IS HORRIBLE! WE DON'T EVEN KNOW ANIEL'S EXACT AGE. HE MUST BE ... THREE OR FOUR YEARS OLD, MAYBE EVEN FIVE ALREADY. WHO KNOWS?



HOLD ON A SECOND. WHAT PROOF DO WE HAVE THAT HALF-WITCH ISN'T RAVING MAD? PERHAPS YOU'RE WORRYING FOR NOTHING, MY SWEET.



YOU KNOW I PROMISED TO RAISE ANIEL AS ONE OF MY OWN CHILDREN — IN FACT, THAT IS HOW I THINK OF HIM. TRUST ME. IT'S A SORT OF MATERNAL INSTINCT THAT LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THAT—

SHOO! GET OUT! AND DON'T YOU EVER COME BACK IN HERE!



WHAT IS IT, SWEETHEART? WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?



SOME NASTY CAT CAME INSIDE AND WAS WATCHING YOU. I FELT THAT HIS SPIRIT WAS EVIL. AND ALSO ...



... ALSO, I REALLY DIDN'T LIKE HIS GREEN EYES.



YOU FORGOT TO PAY ME BEFORE LEAVING, AARICIA, EVEN THOUGH YOU PROMISED YOU'D GIVE ME ANYTHING I WANTED. WELL, NOW I KNOW THE PRICE OF YOUR VISIT ...





IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR FOOT IS MUCH BETTER ALREADY.

WHICH ONLY GOES TO  
SHOW THAT RED MAGIC  
CAN BE PUT TO EVIL USE.

WHEN YOU CONSIDER THAT A BRAINLESS GIRL COULD BE PICKED AS A CANDIDATE BY MANTHOR, IT DOES OPEN UP A LOT OF QUESTIONS ...

QUIET! MANTHOR  
IS HERE!

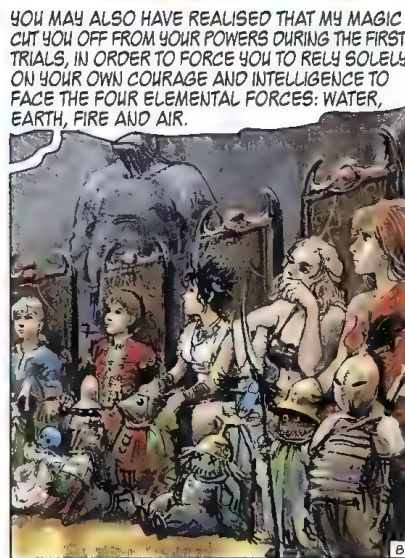
DOESN'T IT? I FOUND SOME HINGENT IN MY ROOM LAST NIGHT. ONE OF THE RIDICULOUS PUPPETS THAT KEEP FOLLOWING ME URGED ME TO USE IT, AND NOW MOST OF THE TORN FLESH HAS ALREADY REGROWN!



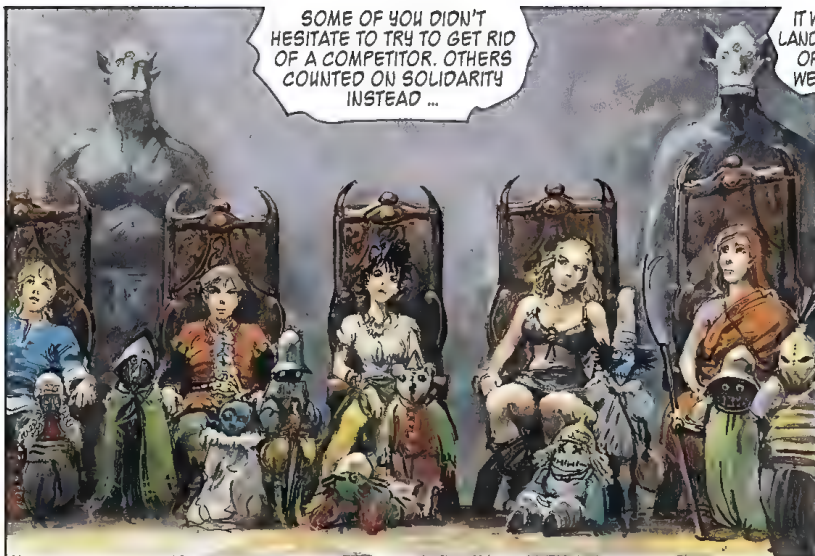
YOU MAY BE SEATED.

AS YOU WILL HAVE UNDERSTOOD BY NOW, I TOLD YOU THAT ONLY TWO FEET COULD COME TO REST ON THE THRESHOLD OF INITIATION SO I COULD OBSERVE HOW EACH OF YOU WOULD ACT ON SUCH A CLUE. HOWEVER, I WAS EXPECTING ALL FIVE OF YOU HERE.

YOU MAY ALSO HAVE REALISED THAT MY MAGIC CUT YOU OFF FROM YOUR POWERS DURING THE FIRST TRIALS, IN ORDER TO FORCE YOU TO RELY SOLELY ON YOUR OWN COURAGE AND INTELLIGENCE TO FACE THE FOUR ELEMENTAL FORCES: WATER, EARTH, FIRE AND AIR.

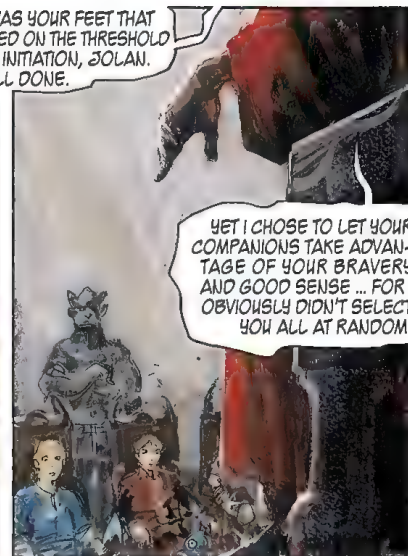




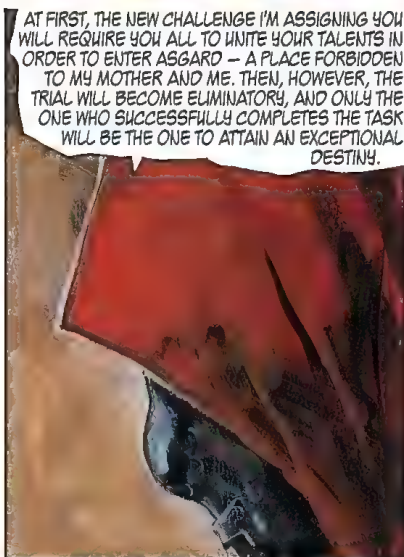


SOME OF YOU DIDN'T  
HESITATE TO TRY TO GET RID  
OF A COMPETITOR. OTHERS  
COUNTED ON SOLIDARITY  
INSTEAD ...

IT WAS YOUR FEET THAT  
LANDED ON THE THRESHOLD  
OF INITIATION, JOLAN.  
WELL DONE.



YET I CHOSE TO LET YOUR  
COMPANIONS TAKE ADVAN-  
TAGE OF YOUR BRAVERY  
AND GOOD SENSE ... FOR I  
OBSOLETELY DIDN'T SELECT  
YOU ALL AT RANDOM.



AT FIRST, THE NEW CHALLENGE I'M ASSIGNING YOU  
WILL REQUIRE YOU ALL TO UNITE YOUR TALENTS IN  
ORDER TO ENTER ASGARD - A PLACE FORBIDDEN  
TO MY MOTHER AND ME. THEN, HOWEVER, THE  
TRIAL WILL BECOME ELIMINATORY, AND ONLY THE  
ONE WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES THE TASK  
WILL BE THE ONE TO ATTAIN AN EXCEPTIONAL  
DESTINY.



FORGIVE ME, MASTER, BUT WHAT PRECISELY  
WILL THAT EXCEPTIONAL DESTINY BE? TO BE  
CLEAR, I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER IT'S REALLY  
WORTH IT TO CONTINUE RISKING MY SKIN IN YOUR  
SUICIDAL TRIALS ALONGSIDE THESE FOUR  
COMMONERS!



I SHALL REMIND YOU THAT YOU AND YOUR COMPAN-  
IONS ALL OWE ME YOUR LIFE, ARLAC. THEREFORE,  
THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION IS: YES, IT IS OVI-  
OUSLY WORTH IT TO CONTINUE THE TRIALS ... UNLESS  
YOU'D LIKE TO STAY IN THE BETWIXT FOR EVER.



KARSH AND HSRAK WILL  
TAKE YOU TO THE CAVE WHERE  
THE GEARS OF TIME AWAIT. I WILL  
JOIN YOU THERE AFTER I VISIT  
MY MOTHER.



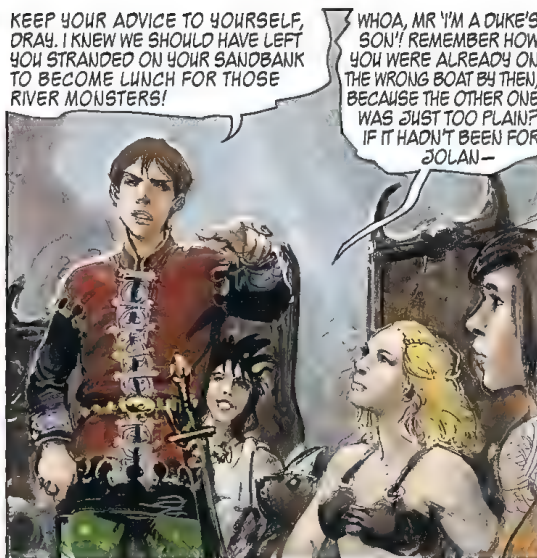
HERE WE GO AGAIN!  
ASKED TO WAIT AND  
OBEY LIKE SO MANY  
SHEEP!

ENOUGH,  
ARLAC. DON'T  
YOU THINK YOU'RE  
OVERREACTING  
A BIT?



KEEP YOUR ADVICE TO YOURSELF,  
DRAY. I KNEW WE SHOULD HAVE LEFT  
YOU STRANDED ON YOUR SANDBANK  
TO BECOME LUNCH FOR THOSE  
RIVER MONSTERS!

WHOA, MR I'M A DUKE'S  
SON! REMEMBER HOW  
YOU WERE ALREADY ON  
THE WRONG BOAT BY THEN,  
BECAUSE THE OTHER ONE  
WAS JUST TOO PLAIN?  
IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR  
JOLAN—



SOMEONE WHO STOOPS TO SELLING  
HER BODY IN EXCHANGE FOR  
FAVOURS SHOULD SHUT HER  
MOUTH, WENCH.

WHY, YOU  
LITTLE—



STOP IT! DON'T START GOING  
AT IT AGAIN, YOU TWO!



HAI HAI HAI! WONDERFUL LITTLE  
JOLAN, WHO CAN'T HELP WANTING  
EVERYONE TO BE FRIENDS! WHY  
DON'T YOU LET THEM SETTLE THEIR  
DIFFERENCES ONCE AND FOR ALL?!





WE'VE ALL BEEN DEPRIVED OF OUR POWERS UNTIL TODAY, BUT, LIKE ME, YOU MUST SENSE THAT MANTHOR GAVE THEM BACK TO US. PERHAPS IT'S TIME WE WERE ALL PROPERLY INTRODUCED, HMM?



SO? ...



WHICH ONE OF YOU FEELS UP TO CHALLENGING ME?



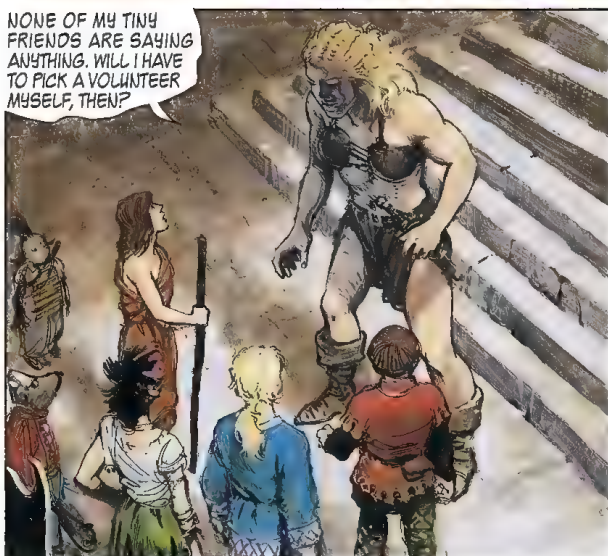
SHE'S JUST GROWN BY AT LEAST FIVE HUMAN YEARS?!

BUT ... THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

MORE IMPORTANTLY, SHE'S GROWN TO A GIANTESS!



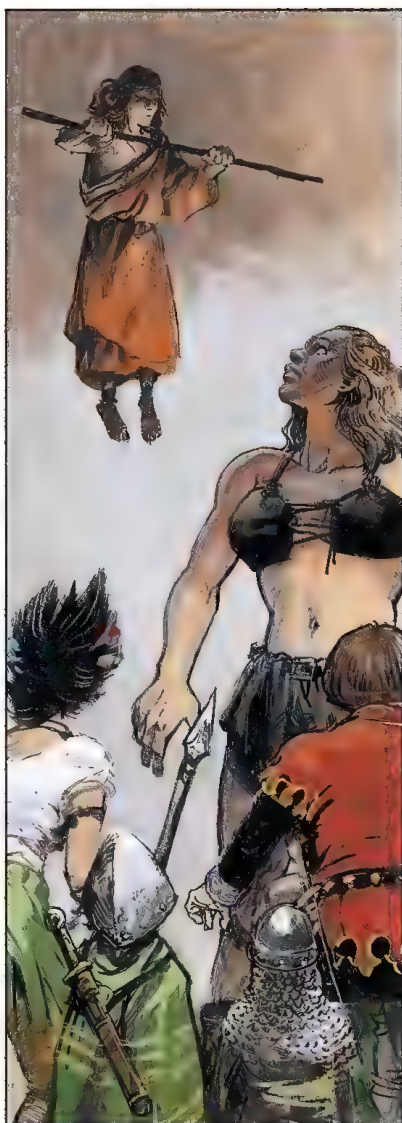
NONE OF MY TINY FRIENDS ARE SAYING ANYTHING. WILL I HAVE TO PICK A VOLUNTEER MYSELF, THEN?



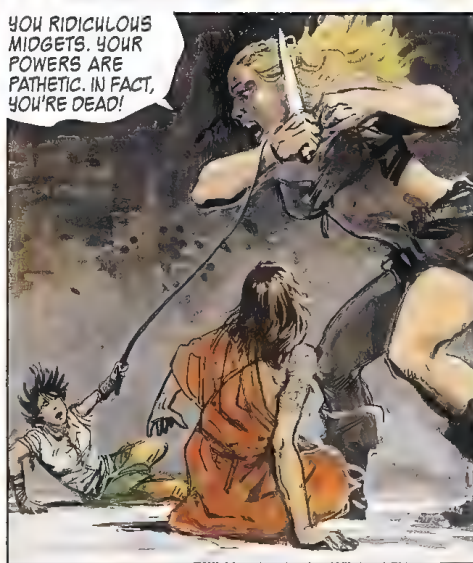
SIZE IS OFTEN JUST AN ILLUSION FOR THOSE WHO DON'T QUITE FEEL 'UP' TO IT, XIA.















ARLAC!  
NO!



WHAT'S WRONG WITH  
YOU, JOLAN? SHE  
TRIED TO KILL US!



I SAID NO. YOU HEARD MANTHOR, SAME  
AS ME. IT MUST BE ALL FIVE OF US  
TOGETHER IF WE WANT TO SUCCEED IN  
THE NEXT TRIAL. OTHERWISE, WE'RE  
NEVER LEAVING THIS REALM.

AND YOU STILL NAIVELY BELIEVE EVERYTHING  
MANTHOR SAYS, EVEN AFTER HE ADMITTED  
LYING TO US ABOUT THE TWO FEET AND THE  
THRESHOLD OF INITIATION.



ARLAC IS RIGHT FOR  
ONCE. WE SHOULD MAKE  
UP OUR OWN MINDS.  
YOU'RE NOT OUR  
LEADER.

THAT KID DOESN'T  
EVEN HAVE ANY  
POWERS ...



AAAAAH!

MY HAND!

AAAAAH!

IT BURNS!

YOU WANTED TO SEE MY POWER  
IN ACTION? THERE. NOW, WE ALL  
GO AND JOIN MANTHOR OR I'LL  
DO TO YOUR HANDS WHAT I DID  
TO YOUR WEAPONS ...



14





WHAT DANGERS IS HE TALKING ABOUT, THORGALP? IS THE FOREST EVIL?

TO BUILD NEW DRAKKARS, WE NEED WOOD FROM THE FINEST TREES, WOLFCUB. SOMETIMES SUCH TREES ARE HIDDEN IN UNFAMILIAR AREAS.

HE'S GOING WITH OUR MEN TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE HE WANTS TO BECOME ONE OF US. YET, YOU HEARD HIM - HE'S ALREADY TEACHING HIS DAUGHTER THAT OUR HUSBANDS ARE COWARDS AND THAT OUR PRAYERS ARE GOOD ONLY FOR COMFORT!

YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, WOMEN?



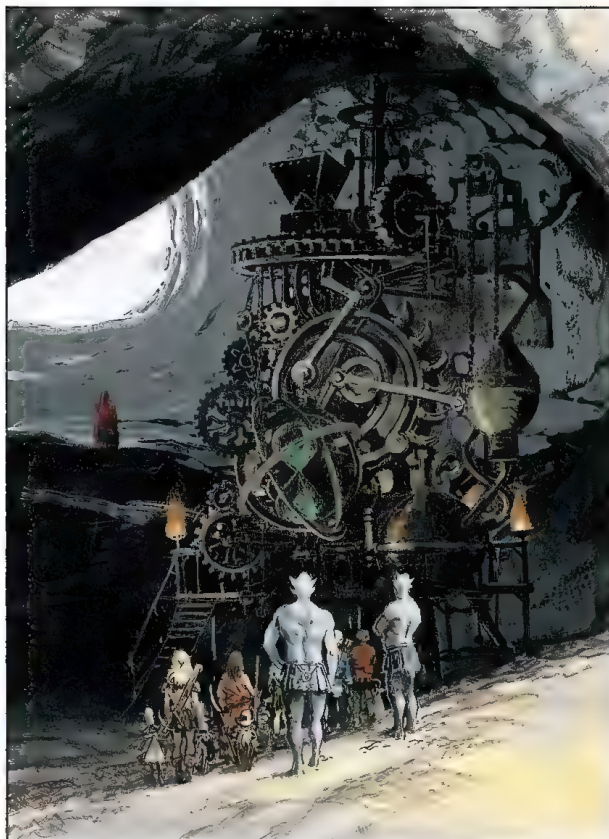
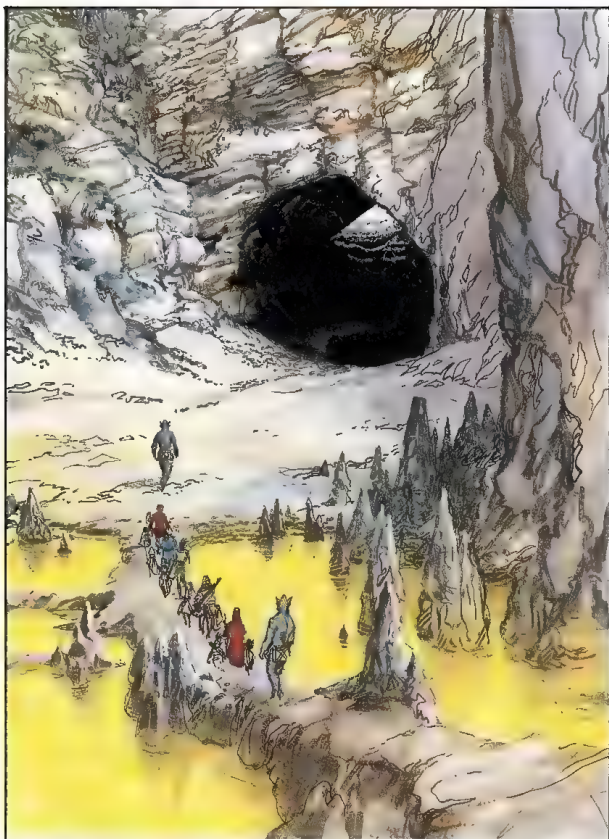
MEN ARE ALWAYS A LITTLE AFRAID OF THE UNKNOWN, AND THAT'S WHY OUR CHIEF ASKED THE GODS TO PROTECT US. THAT'S ALL. YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY.



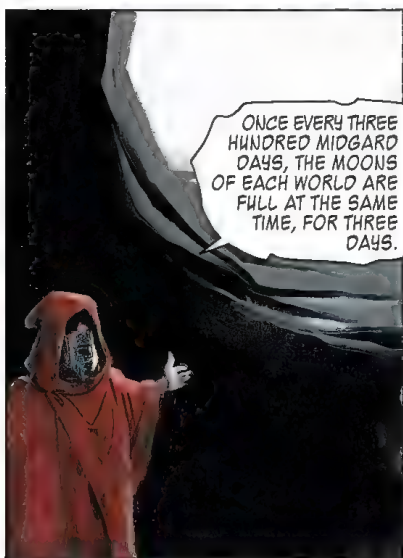
POOR VIKINGS, SO FRAIL AGAINST THE FORCES OF NATURE ... HURRY UP AND GET BACK ON YOUR WAY, MARZIEL. THE SUCCESS OF YOUR MISSION WILL DETERMINE WHETHER I LIVE OUT THE REST OF MY LIFE IN THESE MISERABLE WOODS ... OR NOT.







WHAT YOU SEE BEFORE YOU ARE THE GEARS OF TIME. THOUGH YOU CANNOT TELL, TIME DOESN'T FLOW THE SAME WAY IN THE BETWIXT AS ON MIDGARD, YOUR WORLD — OR EVEN IN ASGARD, REALM OF THE GODS, WHICH LIES THERE BEHIND YOU, BEYOND THE LEDGE AND THE MIST.



ONCE EVERY THREE HUNDRED MIDGARD DAYS, THE MOONS OF EACH WORLD ARE FULL AT THE SAME TIME, FOR THREE DAYS.



DURING THAT SHORT PERIOD, A PASSAGE CALLED THE BRIDGE OF TIME APPEARS BETWEEN THE TIME OF THE BETWIXT AND THE OTHER TIMES. BUT THE GODS DECIDED TO BAR THAT BRIDGE WITH A GATE BEARING FIVE IMPREGNABLE LOCKS, SO THAT NO HUMANS COULD GO AND BOTHER THEM.



TOMORROW, THE MOONS WILL BE FULL IN ALL WORLDS, AND THE BRIDGE OF TIME WILL BE TETHERED TO THE LEDGE OUTSIDE THIS CAVE. THEN YOU WILL ENTER ASGARD AND HAVE THREE DAYS TO PASS THE GATE, MAKE YOUR WAY TO THOR'S FORGE, STEEL HIS BRONZE SHIELD AND BRING IT BACK TO ME. WHOEVER DOES SO WILL BE THE CHOSEN ONE.





MAY WE KNOW WHY YOU WANT THAT SHIELD SO BADLY, MASTER?

I CAN REVEAL NOTHING OF MY ULTIMATE GOAL UNTIL ONE OF YOU SUCCEEDS. IF A GOD WERE TO CAPTURE YOU INSIDE ASGARD, HE'D GET YOU TO TALK BEFORE HE KILLED YOU, BELIEVE ME. THEREFORE, THE BEST WAY FOR ME TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T REVEAL MY PLANS TO THE GODS ... IS TO NOT TELL YOU BEFORE YOU RETURN.

I HAVE SPENT FAR LONGER THAN YOU COULD POSSIBLY FATHOM FINDING AND GATHERING HUMANS POSSESSED OF THE POWERS NECESSARY TO OPEN THE GATE BARRING THE WAY TO THOR'S FORGE. DO NOT DISAPPOINT ME, AND I WILL NOT DISAPPOINT YOU.



WHAT IF ... WE DON'T MANAGE TO BRING THAT SHIELD BACK BEFORE THREE DAYS HAVE PASSED?

I'LL BE HONEST. YOU WILL BE TRAPPED WITHIN ASGARD'S TIME, AND FOR 300 DAYS I WILL BE UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING TO SPARE YOU THE WRATH OF THE GODS - AND REST ASSURED THEY WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO FIND AND DESTROY YOU ...

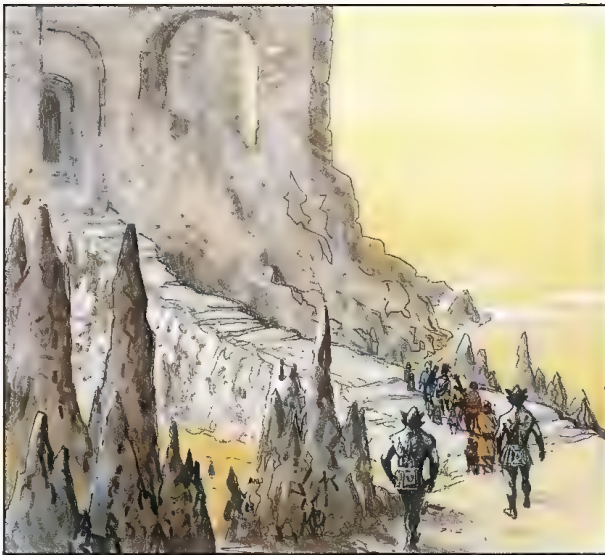


CHEERFUL PROSPECT ...



AS I HAVE TOLD YOU, IT'S TOO LATE TO BACK OUT NOW ANYWAY. MAKE THE BEST OF TODAY AND REST UP. YOU HAVE UNTIL THE MOON REACHES ITS HIGHEST POINT IN THE SKIES OF THE BETWIXT!





WELL, I'M GOING TO GO AND PARTAKE OF EVERY DELICACY THE KITCHENS OF THIS CASTLE MUST HOLD!

YOU DO THAT! GO AND FIG OUT, OR EMPTY YOUR HEAD ... MEANWHILE, I'LL BE PRACTICING MY MARKSMANSHIP. THOR'S SHIELD IS AS GOOD AS MINE ALREADY! HA! HA! HA!

AS FOR ME, I WILL MEDITATE.



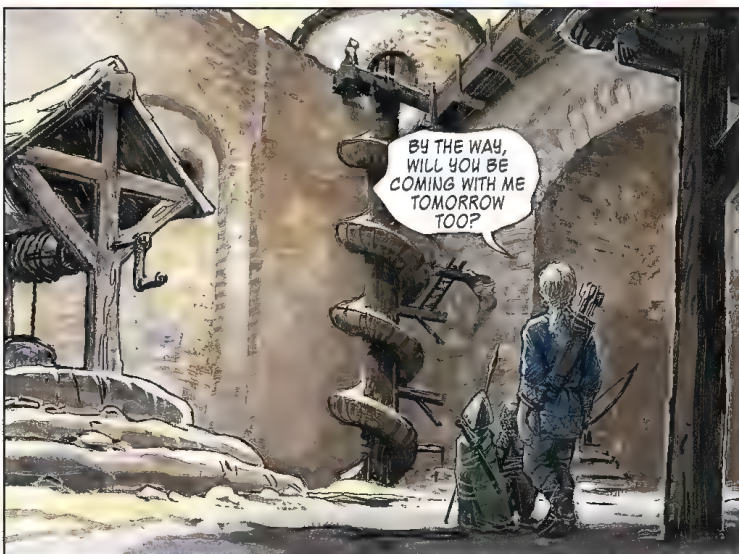
WHAT ABOUT YOU, JOLAN? ANY PLANS? MAYBE WE COULD ...

THANKS, BUT I'D RATHER BE ALONE. I THINK I'LL GO AND REST AWHILE.



HMM. HE'S CERTAINLY A HARD ONE TO TAME, OUR LITTLE JOLAN.

SHUT UP.



BY THE WAY, WILL YOU BE COMING WITH ME TOMORROW TOO?

OH, YES.

DID YOU THINK WE WERE GOING TO ABANDON YOU?





YOU DON'T SEEM PARTICULARLY ENTHUSIASTIC AT THE IDEA, THOUGH.

YOU'RE WRONG, JOLAN. WE'RE EXTREMELY PROUD TO HAVE BEEN PUT AT YOUR SERVICE.

IT'S JUST THE IDEA OF LOSING YOU ALREADY IN THE NEXT THREE DAYS THAT MAKES US SAD.

DON'T BE SO PESSIMISTIC! LET'S GET COMFORTABLE, SO YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW OF MANTHOR AND WHAT HE EXPECTS FROM US.

WE DON'T KNOW MUCH MORE THAN YOU DO, BUT ... WHY NOT?!

AT THIS POINT ...

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND WHAT MANTHOR'S SECRET INTENTIONS MAY BE, I THINK YOU SHOULD FIRST KNOW THAT HIS MOTHER WAS A YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL GODDESS OF ASGARD NAMED VILNYA.

MANY AMONG THE GODS WANTED TO SEDUCE HER AND MAKE HER THEIR WIFE, BUT VILNYA SEEMED TO IGNORE THEM.

UNTIL LOKI, THE GOD WHO IS HALF FIRE, HALF DEMON, TRIED TO FORCE HER TO MARRY HIM.

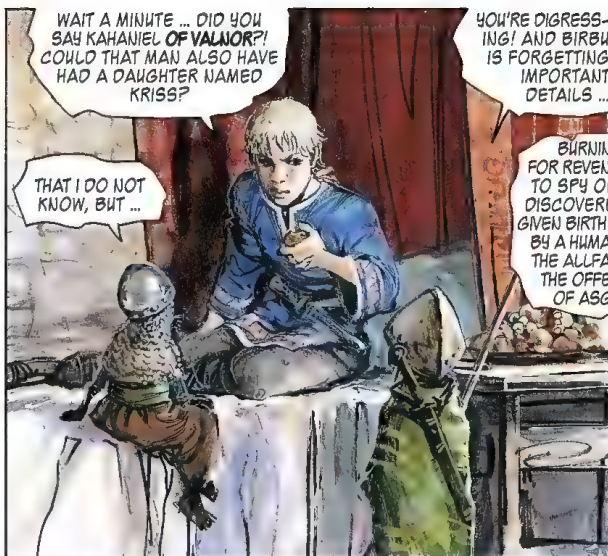
SHE CALLED OUT TO THOR, WHO, LIKE MANY OF THE OTHER GODS, HAD OFTEN FOUND HIMSELF IN CONFLICT WITH LOKI. THE GOD OF THUNDER AND STORMS ANSWERED THE YOUNG GODDESS'S CRY AND PROTECTED HER.

HUMILIATED LOKI SWORE REVENGE ON HER!

NOT LONG AFTER, VILNYA FELL FOR A YOUNG HUMAN CALLED KAHANIEL OF VALNOR, WHO HELD TREMENDOUS POWERS THANKS TO HIS GREAT GRIMOIRE\* OF RED MAGIC. THEY HAD A CHILD ... WHOM THEY CALLED MANTHOR!

\*A BOOK OF MAGIC SPELLS AND INVOCATIONS.



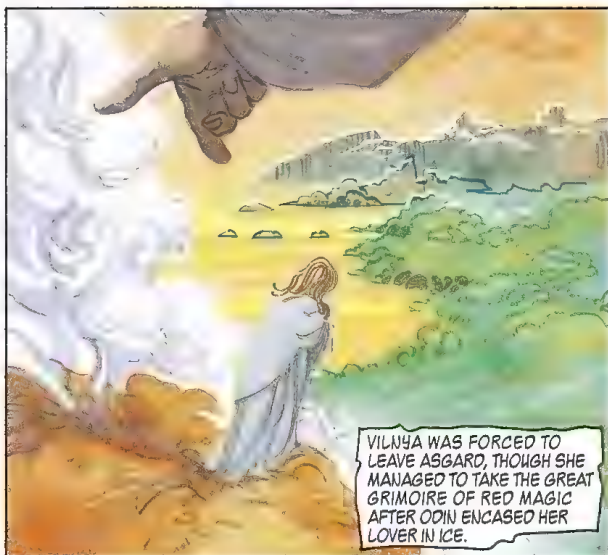
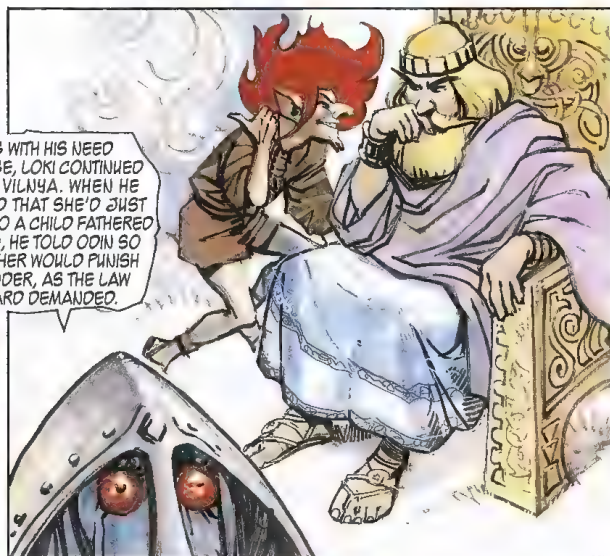


WAIT A MINUTE ... DID YOU SAY KAHANIEL OF VALNOR? COULD THAT MAN ALSO HAVE HAD A DAUGHTER NAMED KRISS?

THAT I DO NOT KNOW, BUT ...

YOU'RE DIGRESSING! AND BIRBH IS FORGETTING IMPORTANT DETAILS ...

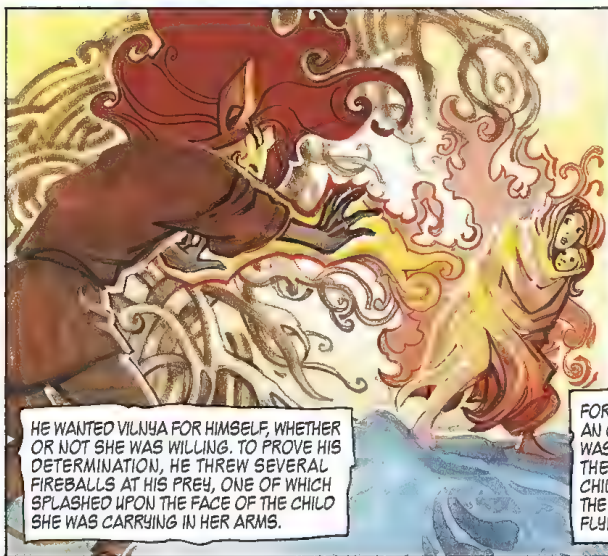
BURNING WITH HIS NEED FOR REVENGE, LOKI CONTINUED TO SPY ON VILNYA. WHEN HE DISCOVERED THAT SHE'D JUST GIVEN BIRTH TO A CHILD FATHERED BY A HUMAN, HE TOLD ODIN SO THE ALLFATHER WOULD PUNISH THE OFFENDER, AS THE LAW OF ASGARD DEMANDED.



VILNYA WAS FORCED TO LEAVE ASGARD, THOUGH SHE MANAGED TO TAKE THE GREAT GRIMOIRE OF RED MAGIC AFTER ODIN ENCASED HER LOVER IN ICE.



STRIPPED OF HER IMMORTALITY, BUT UNWILLING TO GO LIVE AMONG HUMANS, THE GODDESS ATTEMPTED TO FIND REFUGE IN THE BETWIXT. SHE HADN'T TAKEN THE FULL MEASURE OF LOKI'S EVIL, THOUGH ...



HE WANTED VILNYA FOR HIMSELF, WHETHER OR NOT SHE WAS WILLING. TO PROVE HIS DETERMINATION, HE THREW SEVERAL FIREBALLS AT HIS PREY, ONE OF WHICH SPLASHED UPON THE FACE OF THE CHILD SHE WAS CARRYING IN HER ARMS.



FORTUNATELY, THOR -- WHO NEVER LETS AN OPPORTUNITY TO THWART LOKI GO TO WASTE -- INTERVENED IN TIME TO PREVENT THE WORST. HE TOOK MOTHER AND CHILD AND DEPOSITED THEM BEFORE THE ENTRANCE TO THE BETWIXT, BEFORE FLYING BACK TO HIS FORGE.

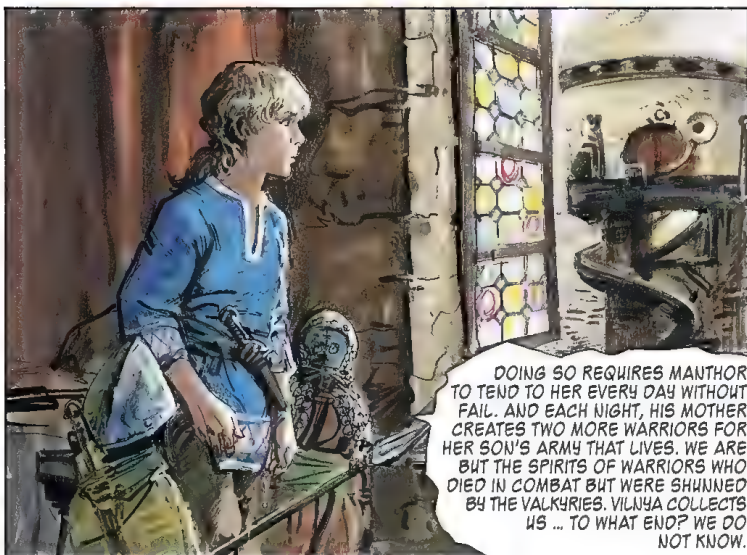




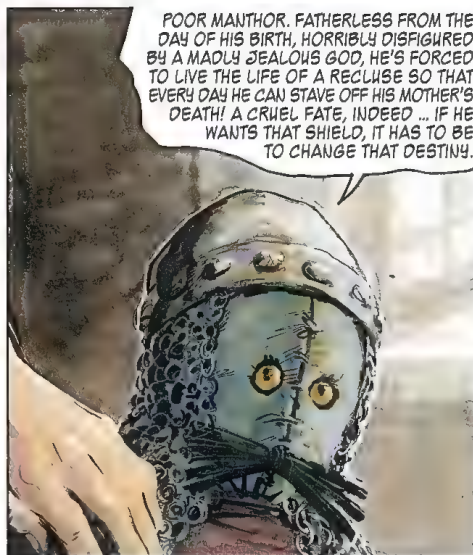
THE TIME OF THE BETWIXT PASSED, AND VILNYA MADE SURE TO TEACH HER SON THE SECRETS HELD IN THE GREAT GRIMOIRE OF RED MAGIC THEY'D INHERITED FROM KAHANIEL.



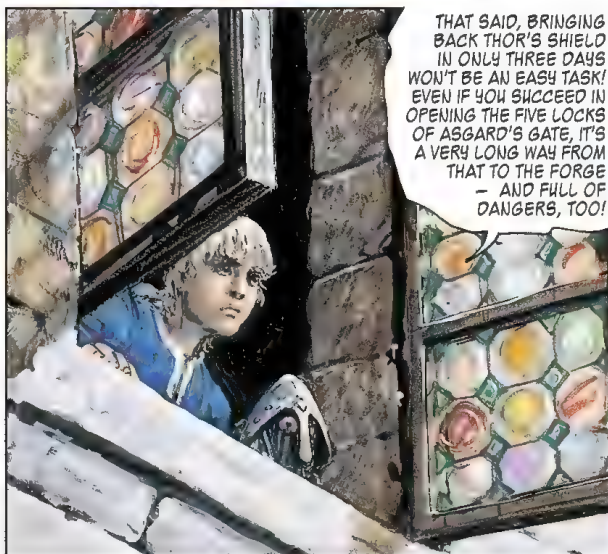
THE SON GREW. THANKS TO HIS KNOWLEDGE OF RED MAGIC, HE BUILT FOR HIMSELF A FABULOUS CASTLE. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THOUGH, HE ALSO FOUND WAYS TO DELAY THE AGING OF HIS BELOVED MOTHER.



DOING SO REQUIRES MANTHOR TO TEND TO HER EVERY DAY WITHOUT FAIL. AND EACH NIGHT, HIS MOTHER CREATES TWO MORE WARRIORS FOR HER SON'S ARMY THAT LIVES. WE ARE BUT THE SPIRITS OF WARRIORS WHO DIED IN COMBAT BUT WERE SHUNNED BY THE VALKYRIES. VILNYA COLLECTS US ... TO WHAT END? WE DO NOT KNOW.



POOR MANTHOR. FATHERLESS FROM THE DAY OF HIS BIRTH, HORRIBLY DISFIGURED BY A MADLY JEALOUS GOD, HE'S FORCED TO LIVE THE LIFE OF A RECLUSE SO THAT EVERY DAY HE CAN STAVE OFF HIS MOTHER'S DEATH! A CRUEL FATE, INDEED ... IF HE WANTS THAT SHIELD, IT HAS TO BE TO CHANGE THAT DESTINY.



THAT SAID, BRINGING BACK THOR'S SHIELD IN ONLY THREE DAYS WON'T BE AN EASY TASK! EVEN IF YOU SUCCEED IN OPENING THE FIVE LOCKS OF ASGARD'S GATE, IT'S A VERY LONG WAY FROM THAT TO THE FORGE — AND FULL OF DANGERS, TOO!



SUCH A PITY! THAT VIBRANT YOUTH SACRIFICED IN VAIN. WHY WON'T YOU LET ME GROW OLD, MY SON?





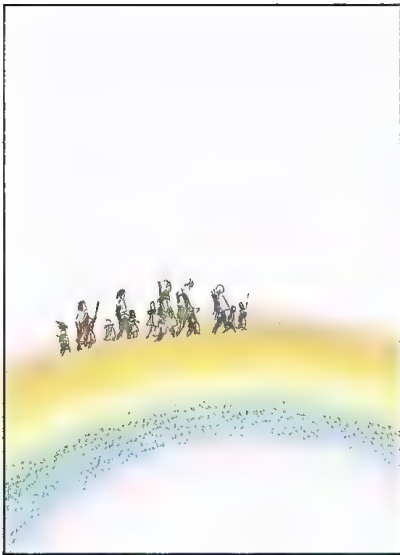




















EVERYONE READY? ON MY MARK! THREE, TWO, ONE ... TURN!



NOT A MINUTE TO WASTE NOW - AND EVERY WOMAN FOR HERSELF!



YOUR COMPANIONS  
RUN QUICKLY,  
JOLAN. THEY'RE  
ALREADY DIS-  
APPEARING IN  
THAT MIST.

COME ON. YOU  
MUST HURRY.  
TRY TO STAND  
UP. LEAN ON  
US.



BURBI, OVER THERE! IT  
LOOKS LIKE YGGDRASIL.

YGG ... DRASIL?

YGGDRASIL, JOLAN. THE  
COSMIC TREE. ITS LEAVES  
BRUSH AGAINST THE REALM  
OF THE GODS, WHILE ITS  
ROOTS GO ALL THE WAY TO  
THE UNDERWORLD. THEY SAY  
IT'S ALWAYS GREEN  
BECAUSE IT DRAWS ITS  
UNIQUE STRENGTH FROM  
THE WELL OF URD.



THEY ALSO SAY  
THAT FROM IT SPRINGS  
THE WELL OF THE  
GOD MIMIR AND THAT  
ODIN HIMSELF—

SHHH! YOU'LL HAVE  
AMPLE TIME TO TELL  
ME EVERYTHING  
YOU KNOW IF WE  
GET OUT OF THIS  
ADVENTURE ALIVE. IN  
THE MEANTIME, STAY  
ALERT. I FEEL—



A DANGER,  
PERHAPS?



THAT'S ONE DOWN!  
HA! HA! HA!

WHAT CAN I SAY?! THIS IS  
OUR MISTRESS'S FAVOURITE  
TACTIC: ELIMINATE THE WEAK,  
THEN FOLLOW THE STRONG,  
THE BETTER TO PROFIT FROM  
THEIR EXPERIENCE BEFORE  
SHE ELIMINATES THEM TOO.  
WELL, GOOD LUCK ANYWAY,  
FELLOWS!



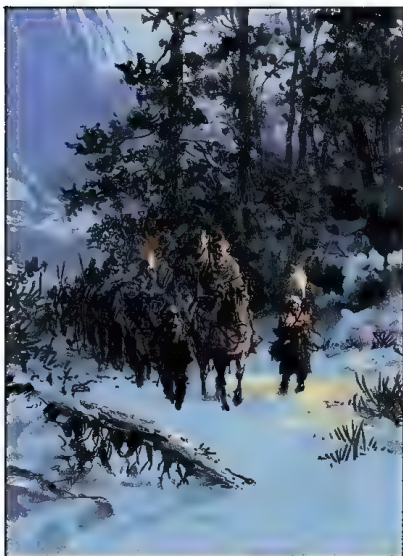
OH, BOTHER!  
OH, BOTHER!



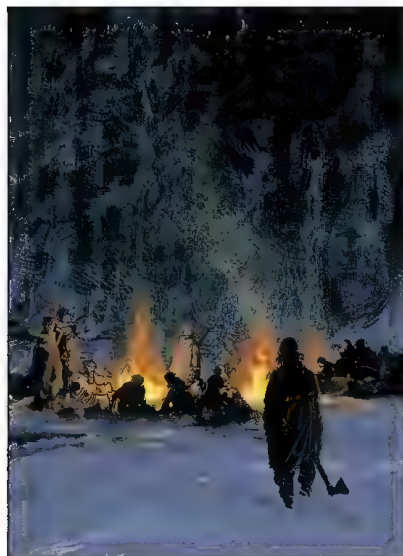
OH, BOTHER!  
OH, B—

YEAH,  
ALL RIGHT,  
I HEARD YOU.  
WHAT DO WE  
DO NOW?





TOMORROW WE'LL LOOK OVER THIS COPSE. LET'S CAMP HERE AND GATHER OUR STRENGTH FOR THE COMING WORK.



IF YOU'VE GUESSED CORRECTLY ABOUT THAT LITTLE ANIEL, AND IF ON TOP OF IT MOST OF THE ABLE-BODIED MEN IN THE VILLAGE LEFT YESTERDAY, THEN YOUR NEWS IS EXCELLENT, MAHARA, AND I WILL REWARD YOU WELL.

NOBLE LORD, PERHAPS YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT I TRIED MANY TIMES TO BE MADE A PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF RED MAGIC - TO NO AVAIL ...



WE COME TO IT AT LAST! YOU'RE A SLY ONE, OLD CRONE. IF THE BOY DOES CARRY INSIDE HIM THE LONG-AWAITED RETURN OF MASTER KAHANIEL, WE WILL NOT BE UNGRATEFUL, AND YOUR REQUEST MAY RECEIVE A POSITIVE ANSWER AT LAST.

OH, THANK YOU! THANK YOU, NOBLE LORD.



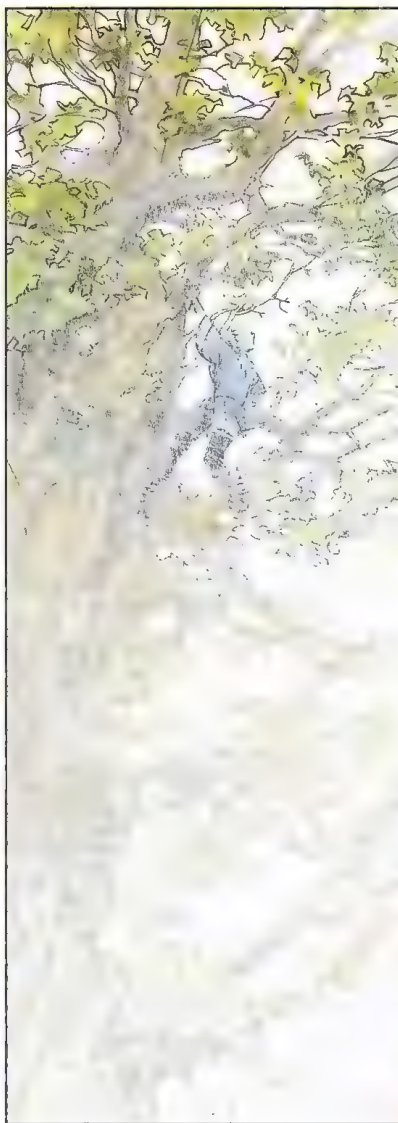
IN THE MEANTIME, YOU WILL OFFER HOSPITALITY TO US AND OUR MOUNTS. WE'LL SLEEP TO RECOVER THE STRENGTH WE WILL NEED AT DAWN. WE CANNOT WASTE EVEN A DAY.

THE CHILD IS ONLY FOUR OR FIVE, LORD. KAHANIEL'S REINCARNATION IS PROPHESIED FOR WHEN HE REACHES TEN. YOU HAVE ALL THE TIME YOU NEED TO PREPARE THE KIDNAPPING CAREFULLY.

WRONG, OLD CRONE. KAHANIEL HAD THE POWER TO DOUBLE THE SPEED AT WHICH THE MIND DEVELOPED COMPARED TO THE BODY. IN OTHER WORDS, IF ANIEL IS NEARLY FIVE, IT MEANS THAT KAHANIEL'S SPIRIT, WHICH IS GROWING INSIDE HIM, WILL SOON REACH THE AGE ... OF TEN! BELIEVE ME, IT IS THE MIND'S AGE THAT OUR MASTER WAS TALKING ABOUT IN HIS TESTAMENT!











SOP? ARE YOU FINALLY READY?  
WE'VE LOST A LOT OF TIME  
AS IT IS.



YOU'RE  
RIGHT. LET'S  
GO.

DID YOU SEE IF THOR'S  
FORGE WAS STILL FAR  
AWAY FROM UP  
THERE?



WE'RE ALREADY  
HALF A DAY BEHIND.  
THAT LEAVES ONLY  
TWO AND A HALF  
DAYS TO GET THE  
SHIELD AND COME  
BACK!



3OLAN?!

WAIT ... HE'S  
GONE MAD!



HEY!  
WAIT FOR  
US!

YOU SILLY BOY  
- YOU'RE HEADING  
IN THE WRONG  
DIRECTION!

I SAW THOR'S FORGE FROM THE TOP OF YGG-  
DRASIL. IT'S MUCH TOO FAR TO HAVE ANY HOPE  
OF MAKING IT THERE AND BACK IN UNDER A DAY  
AND A HALF. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE EVEN  
WITHOUT ANY OBSTACLES OR WITHOUT STOPPING  
TO EAT AND SLEEP.

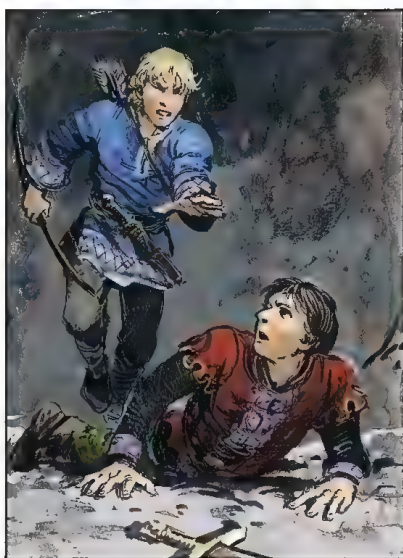
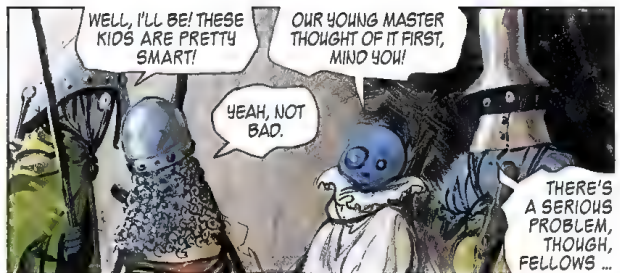
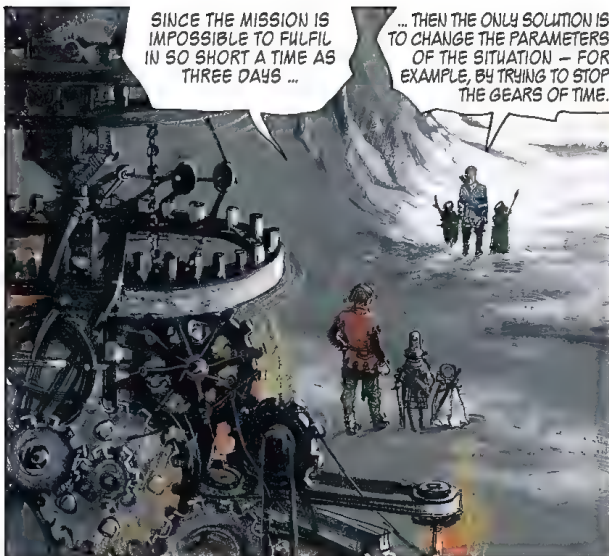


THE ONLY WAY  
TO MANAGE  
IT IS TO GO ...  
THIS WAY!



I MUST SAY I'M AS  
SURPRISED AS I AM GLAD  
TO SEE I'M NOT THE ONLY  
ONE OF US WHO BOTHERS  
TO USE HIS BRAIN!







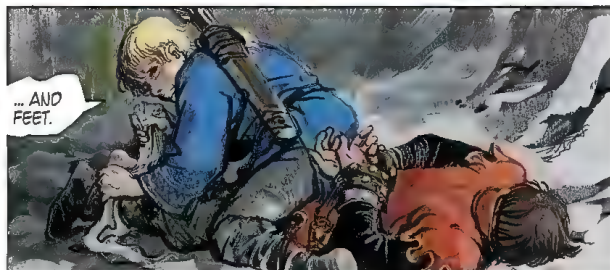


I'M SICK OF TRUSTING AND STANDING TOGETHER WITH PEOPLE WHO NEVER HESITATE TO STAB ME IN THE BACK. I'M GOING IT ALONE THIS TIME. HANDS BEHIND YOUR BACK!



WHAT ... ARE YOU DOING?

CAN'T YOU TELL? I'M BINDING YOUR HANDS ...



... AND FEET.



AND NOW ... MPF ... I'M DRAGGING YOU OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE BETWIXT TO MAKE SURE YOU WON'T BE GOING ANYWHERE UNTIL I COME BACK.



YOU TWO JOIN HIM! NO ARGUMENTS.

BASTARD! UNTIE ME! I THOUGHT OF STOPPING THE GEARS OF TIME BEFORE YOU. THIS ISN'T FAIR!



NOW, THIS HAD BETTER WORK ...



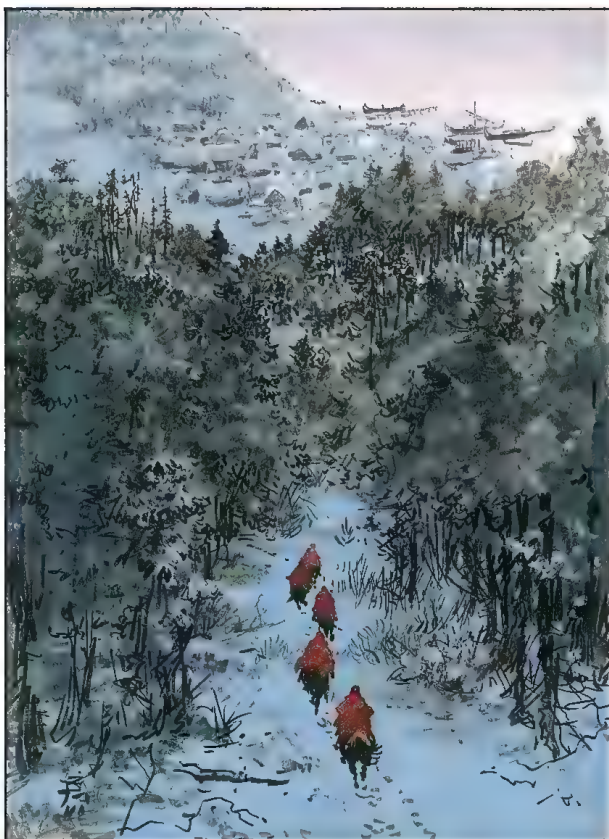
KRRRRHHHHH



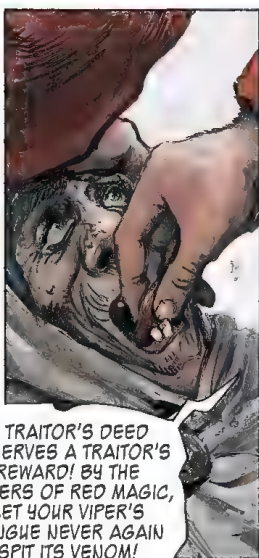
KRRRRHHHHH CLACK!

HA! HA! HA! HURRAY FOR THE MASTER OF TIME! HA! HA! HA!









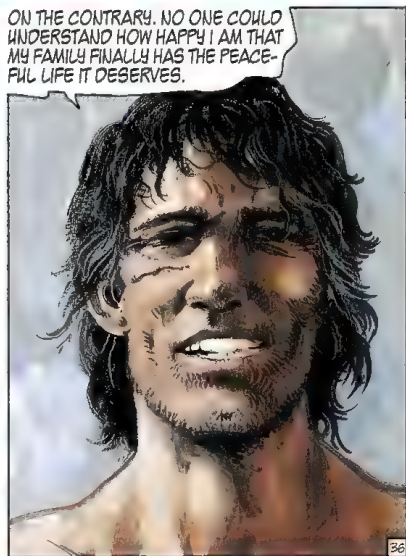




ANIEL! NO-O-O-O!

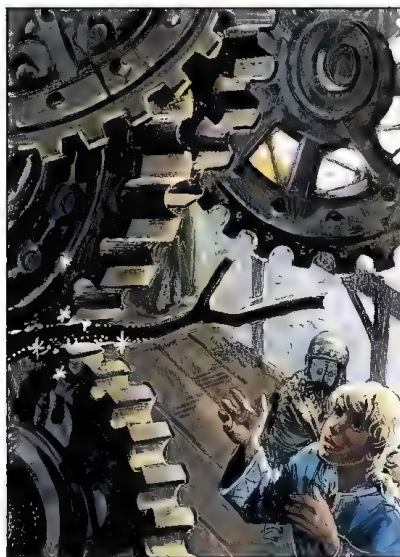
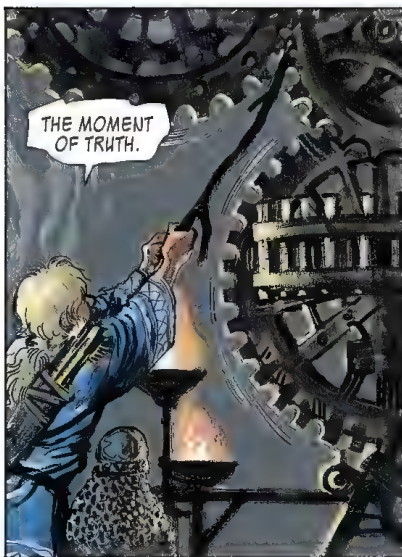
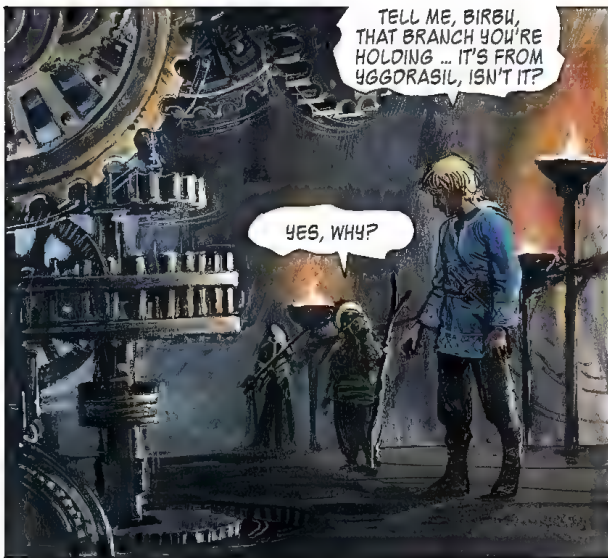


WELL, THORGAL, I HOPE THIS HARD LABOUR ISN'T MAKING YOU REGRET COMING BACK TO THE VILLAGE ... ?



ON THE CONTRARY. NO ONE COULD UNDERSTAND HOW HAPPY I AM THAT MY FAMILY FINALLY HAS THE PEACEFUL LIFE IT DESERVES.

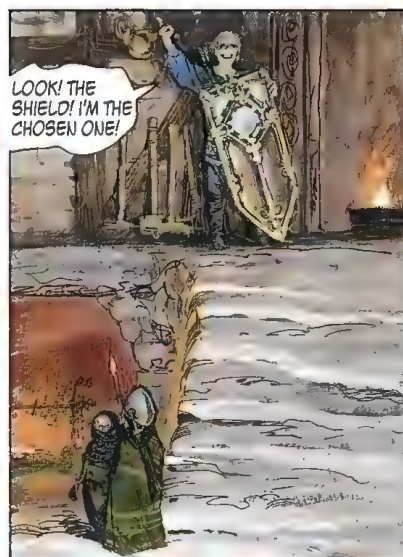
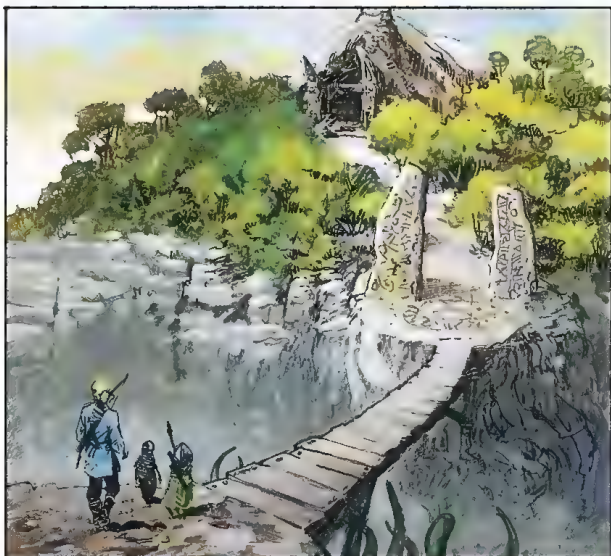








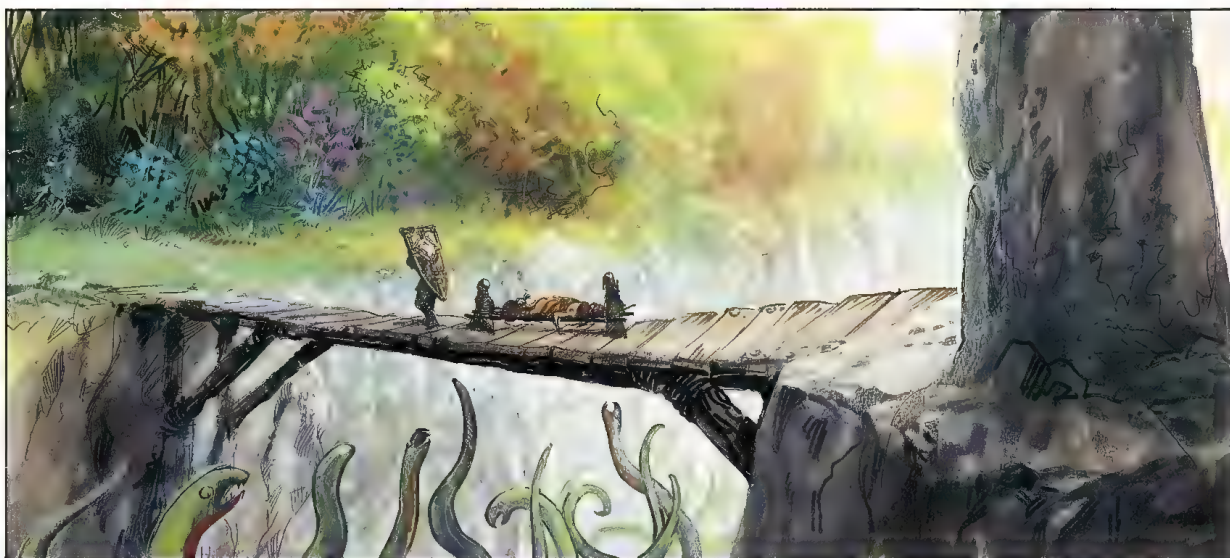




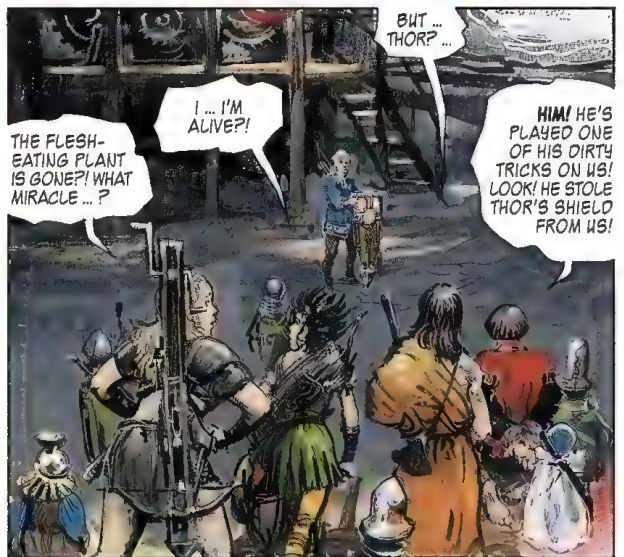




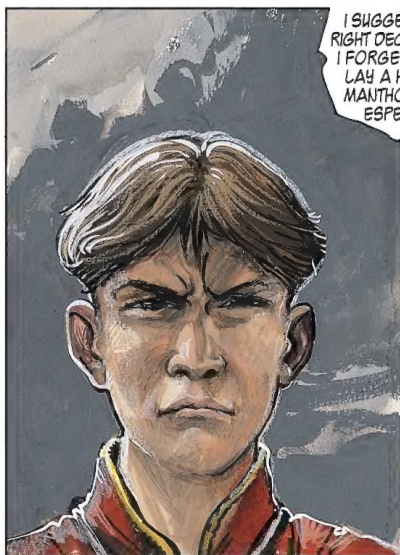














FOR ANYONE WHO MAY STILL HAVE DOUBTS, I, MANTHOR, MASTER OF THE BETWIXT, HEREBY PROCLAIM IT: **YOU ARE THE CHOSEN ONE, SOLAN!**



NOT ONLY DID YOU PROVE BOTH BRAVE AND RESOURCEFUL, BUT YOU WERE ALSO GENEROUS AND MERCIFUL TOWARDS THOSE WHO DID NOT ALWAYS DESERVE IT.



HEAR ME NOW: YOU HAVE PRESERVED YOUR HONOUR BY SPONTANEOUSLY BENDING THE KNEE TO SOLAN ...



... BUT YOU HAVE ALSO PRESERVED YOUR LIVES, FOR I WOULD NOT HAVE TOLERATED THAT ONE OF YOU RAISE A HAND TO THE CHOSEN ONE.



GO NOW, AND RETURN TO THE CASTLE AND YOUR ROOMS. TOMORROW I SHALL LET YOU KNOW WHAT FUTURE I SHALL GIVE THOSE LIVES SOLAN CHOSE TO SPARE.



AS FOR YOU, SOLAN, TOMORROW I WILL TELL YOU WHAT THE CHOSEN ONE'S MISSION IS TO BE. YOUR TRIALS ARE NOT OVER YET. BUT SUCH IS THE PRICE OF UNLOCKING AN EXCEPTIONAL DESTINY.



I'M READY.







THE MEN WERE RED MAGES — THEY LOOKED LIKE THE ONES I SAW IN MAHARA'S MIRROR OF TIME. THEY MUST HAVE LEARNED FROM THAT WITCH THAT THEIR MASTER WAS GOING TO REINCARNATE IN ANIEL'S BODY! THEY'LL WANT TO KEEP HIM UNTIL HE REACHES TEN YEARS OF AGE, I'M SURE! AND WHEN HE DOES ...





